

VZCZCXRO3825
RR RUEHROV
DE RUEHAE #0384 2181134
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 051134Z AUG 08 ZDK
FM AMEMBASSY ASMARA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9823
INFO RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RHMFISS/CDR USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUMICEA/JICCENT MACDILL AFB FL
RUEPADJ/CJTF-HOA J2X CAMP LEMONIER DJ
RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE
RHRMDAB/COMUSNAVCENT

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 000384

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR AF/E
LONDON AND PARIS FOR AFRICA WATCHERS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/04/2018

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PINS](#) [ER](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: JEM IN ERTIREA

1. (C) SUMMARY: Darfur's Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) maintains a liaison office in Asmara headed by Osman Wash, JEM's Secretary for Justice and Legal Affairs. A number of JEM "former fighters" also reside in Eritrea. JEM is reportedly seeking to persuade Eritrea to host a Sudanese all-party conference aimed at forging a ruling grand coalition. END SUMMARY.

2. (C) A "CHANCE" ENCOUNTER WITH JEM

On July 30, the director of the Peacebuilding Center for the Horn of Africa, Dr. Taisier Ail, intercepted the ambassador on the outside steps as he arrived for a routine call. Dr. Ali explained that an earlier caller, who was still inside, had expressed an interest in meeting the ambassaor. The other visitor introduced himself as Osman Wash, JEM's Secretary of Justice and Legal Affairs. In a polite 15-minute conversation, Wash said he serves as JEM's liaison officer with Eritrea and travels back and forth between Asmara and "the field." Osman Wash said JEM has a small Asmara office staffed by less than a dozen personnel, in addition to a larger number of "former fighters" living in Eritrea. Wash looked about 40 years old, was dressed in an ill-fitting coat and tie, and spoke passable English.

3. (C) JEM'S POLITICAL ROADMAP

Osman Wash provided the ambassador a document called "Darfur JEM Proposal for an Interim Government After ICC Charges Against Sudan President." The document states that Bashir's ruling NCP party has seen its legitimacy eroded as a result of the ICC indictment. To preserve the "unity" of Sudan it proposes to implement the CPA and to call a "conference of regions to address issues of national identity, unions of regions of Sudan, system of governance, and a new constitution." JEM proposes a multi-tiered federal system based on seven regions, with Darfur being one of the seven. Much of the central government's current power and authority would be transferred to the regions under this proposal. The document is dated July 15 and was issued by Ahmed Tougdlisan, Bureau for Political Affairs.

4. (C) ERITREA TO HOST AN ALL-PARTY CONFERENCE?

After Osman Wash departed, Taisier Ali confided to the ambassador that Wash had asked him to approach the government of Eritrea about hosting an "all-party conference" to create a governing grand coalition. (Perhaps the "conference of regions" mentioned above?) Dr. Ali said his gut reaction was very negative, as this arrangement could help the hard-line

Islamists regain a share of power in Sudan. He was also suspicious of Osman Wash's approach, adding, "JEM has their own channels to the Eritreans, so why are they asking me to propose this?"

15. (C) A SUDANESE REVOLVING DOOR

Taisier Ali quickly concluded the discussion, explaining, "I've got another set of Darfuris cooling their heels in my back room. They don't get along with JEM, so I had to keep them apart." Dr. Ali, a Sudanese of Nubian background, is a political exile. He walks with a slight limp due to spinal column damage suffered under torture by Sudanese security officials in Khartoum. He has received a \$150,000 grant from Embassy Asmara to help promote democracy and civil society in eastern Sudan in support of the Eastern Sudan Peace Agreement.

MCMULLEN